

A MEMORIAL OF WHAT GOD HATH WROUGHT.

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT

PEACHAM, (VERMONT,) MARCH 31, 1839.

BY LEONARD WORCESTER,

Pastor of the Congregational Church in Peacham.

MONTPELIER :

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1839.

NOTE.

THE following is a bill of mortality in Peacham, for thirty-nine years, from January 1, 1800, to December 31, 1838 :

The number of deaths in the year 1800 was 9 ; in 1801, 6 ; 1802, 12 ; 1803, 24 ; 1804, 14 ; 1805, 11 ; 1806, 11 ; 1807, 17 ; 1808, 11 ; 1809, 12 ; 1810, 20 ; 1811, 59 ; 1812, 14 ; 1813, 32 ; 1814, 36 ; 1815, 15 ; 1816, 9 ; 1817, 14 ; 1818, 10 ; 1819, 13 ; 1820, 9 ; 1821, 10 ; 1822, 23 ; 1823, 19 ; 1824, 9 ; 1825, 18 ; 1826, 17 ; 1827, 16 ; 1828, 16 ; 1829, 17 ; 1830, 19 ; 1831, 9 ; 1832, 11 ; 1833, 10 ; 1834, 25 ; 1835, 12 ; 1836, 16 ; 1837, 23 ; 1838, 15. Total, 643. Deceased under the age of one year, 180 ; from one to five, 105 ; from five to ten, 33 ; ten to twenty, 51 ; twenty to thirty, 53 ; thirty to forty, 51 ; forty to fifty, 37 ; fifty to sixty, 22 ; sixty to seventy, 38 ; seventy to eighty, 35 ; eighty to ninety, 26 ; ninety to ninety-six, 12. Over ten years of age, males, 146 ; females, 179 ; total, 325.

DISCOURSE.

NUMBERS, XXIII. 23.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT !

WE have abundant evidence in the holy scriptures, not only that “the works of the Lord are great;” but, also, that they are “sought out of all them who have pleasure therein.” The great works of creation, of common providence, and of the redemption of our ruined race, by Jesus Christ, furnished themes on which the inspired writers, and other holy men of old, delighted to dwell. They were themes, too, to which frequent recurrence was had, to lead men to feel the greatness of their obligations to their infinite Creator, and constant Benefactor ; to excite in them admiring and adoring apprehensions of this glorious Being ; and, if possible, to induce them to unite, with heart and voice, in praising “the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” In respect to these things, as in various other respects, the inspired writers furnish an example, which it must well become all who are called to minister in holy things, and to “show unto men the way of salvation,” carefully to imitate. They should, not unfrequently, direct the attention of those to whom they minister, to what God hath wrought with such admirable wisdom, and with almighty power, in creating the heavens and the earth, and in giving existence to all which our eyes behold, or of which we are otherwise informed, from those stupendous orbs which roll in immeasurable space, to the smallest atom that floats in the sunbeam ; and from the most exalted archangel around His throne of glory, to the most minute of all the creatures to which He has given life. Attention should also be directed to the various dispensations of divine Providence ; and, especially, to those dispensations which have had more immediate respect to that race of beings to which ourselves belong. Here, as in the great work of creation, we cannot but find frequent, and even constant occasion to exclaim, “What hath God wrought !” “This is the Lord’s doing ; it is marvellous in our eyes !” Whether we contemplate the common dispensations of divine Providence, in the revolutions of the planetary world ; in the regular succession of the seasons, summer and winter, seed time and harvest ; in the regular return of day and night ; in rain and sunshine ; in the preservation of

our own race, and of other orders of creatures; in the passing away of one, and the coming of another generation; in the means of subsistence constantly provided and kindly bestowed; and in other things innumerable; or whether our attention be fixed on more special dispensations of Providence, whether of judgment or of mercy; such as the destruction of the world by a deluge; the overwhelming of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven; the plagues of Egypt; the feeding of Elijah by ravens, and causing that the barrel of meal should not waste, nor the cruse of oil fail; the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, from the fiery furnace of the enraged monarch of Babylon, and of Daniel from the hungry lions; and a multitude of other events of a similar character; who can forbear the exclamation, "What hath God wrought!"

But, above all, should the ministers of the gospel frequently,—may I not say constantly?—direct the attention of those, to whom they are called to declare the counsel of God, to that greatest and most wonderful of all the works of the Lord, the redemption and salvation of our fallen race, by Jesus Christ. It is here that He has made the most clear and full display of His adorable perfections,—of His glorious character; and it is here that He has laid men under the highest obligations of gratitude and love. It is in this great work that those wonderful things are found, "into which the angels desire to look." This is the great and glorious work, in view of which, especially, myriads of adoring saints and angels in glory, unite in ascribing "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." Hence, it seems difficult to conceive how any thing can deserve the name of a gospel sermon, which does not, in some way, have an important bearing upon this great work, and bring into view something, which may justly give occasion to the exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" In contemplating the works of creation, and divine providential dispensations, whether common or special, their connexion with the great work of redemption, by Jesus Christ, should never be forgotten. It was, no doubt, in view of what God would do for the people of Israel, in carrying forward this great and glorious work, that the spirit of inspiration constrained Balaam, a wicked soothsayer, to exclaim, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!"

My design, in the present discourse, is, to give some account of the Lord's gracious dealings with the people of this place, from its first settlement;—more particularly, of what He has done in connexion with my ministry here, which is now drawing near its close. In fulfilling my design, it will be my aim to keep the great work of redemption in view, and to show you what the Lord has been

doing here, in carrying forward this great work, to the glory of His name, and so as to bring this people under unspeakable obligations to Him.

This town began to be settled in troublous times, just at the commencement of the revolutionary war. If I am correctly informed, it was first surveyed, and laid out in lots, in the year 1774, sixty-five years ago the coming summer. The same year, several lots were selected for settlement; and on some three or four of them a few trees were fallen. The following year, which, you know, was the one in which the war commenced, several other settlers came in, and began to work on their land; but no family removed hither until May, 1776. Then the late Deacon Jonathan Elkins, with his family, came in. Becoming apprehensive of being molested by the enemy, however, they returned, in a few weeks, to Haverhill, N. H., from whence they came. There the family remained until October of the same year, when they came hither again, and became permanent residents. That family, and one other, were all that were here during the succeeding winter. The following year, a small addition was made to the number; and in October, of that year, the first child, whose birth-place was Peacham, was born; Mr. Harvey Elkins, who deceased, a few years ago, at New Orleans. In 1781, three persons were taken prisoners here; one of whom, our aged friend, Col. Jonathan Elkins, who lately removed from among us, was first taken to Quebec, then to Ireland, and at length to England. Being exchanged, he returned to his friends the following year. Of the other two, one made his escape; and the other was permitted to return to his family, at Newbury, on parole. In 1782, two other persons were taken prisoners; but they were detained only two or three months. The danger to which the inhabitants were thus exposed, in a time of war, being on the frontier, probably hindered the growth of the town considerably, so that, up to this time, the number of families continued to be small.

Of the organization of the town there is no record to be found; and when it was first organized, I apprehend cannot be certainly determined. The first town meeting of which there is any record, was the annual March meeting, in 1784. That meeting was warned, however, by Selectmen, who were probably chosen at an annual March meeting of the preceding year. There is, also, a list of freemen on record, the first six of whom were sworn, March 18, 1783, before James Bailey, jun. Town Clerk; and the next eleven, March 16, 1784, before Reuben Wilmot, Town Clerk. It seems not improbable, therefore, that March 18, 1783, the day when the first freemen on the list were sworn, was also the day on which Mr. Bailey was chosen Town Clerk, and on which the town was organized. Then, or somewhat earlier, it must have been. So far as appears from the records, the number of free-

men in the town in March, 1784, was only seventeen. To this number seven were added in September following, increasing the list to twenty-four. I mention these facts, that it may be seen, as I think it will be presently, that there was, among the early inhabitants of this town, a disposition, very honorable to themselves, to introduce and sustain the preaching of the gospel, and the administration of divine ordinances, among them, while the town was yet in its infancy.

After the conclusion of the revolutionary war, the increase of the town in population and prosperity was considerably accelerated. Many families were soon added to the number already here, and, literally and extensively, the wilderness was converted into a fruitful field, and the population of the town became respectable in numbers, as it is believed it was also in character. A disposition was manifested very favorable both to religious institutions, and to the instruction of the rising generation. The establishment of a County Grammar School here was pretty early sought for and obtained, on terms which were honorable to the inhabitants generally; as, while several individuals made very considerable donations, the town at large subjected itself to no little expense to secure the grant. That this institution has been of inestimable value to this people, and to all the region round about, as it has afforded great numbers of our youth an opportunity to acquire much useful knowledge, is beyond all question. No less than twenty-six young men, from among the inhabitants of this town, have obtained a college education, having been prepared to enter college in this institution. Six of these are, or have been, favorably known as preachers of the gospel; one of whom is now a Missionary among the Cherokee Indians, and another in the Sandwich Islands. Two are settled Ministers in their own country; one, soon after being settled, was called from his labors on earth to his eternal home; and the other has recently become a candidate for the ministry. Most of the others, who have been publicly educated, are, or have been, useful and respectable members of society, in different professions and employments; though several of these have been removed by death. Of our young men, two have become acceptable Ministers of the gospel, and twelve have been educated as Physicians, without having pursued a college course. And how many others, both male and female, have received instruction here, which has qualified them to be teachers of others, and to be useful in various other stations and employments, I cannot, and need not undertake to tell. But these things I give only a passing notice, and hasten to others, which have a more immediate connexion with our great Redeemer's precious cause.

The first Church gathered in this town was of the Presbyterian order. It was organized by the late Rev. Peter Powers, then Pastor

of the Church in Newbury, January 22, 1784, and consisted of eighteen members, ten males, and eight females. But, according to information received from some of its members, that Church was soon involved in great difficulties, which continued for a long season, and finally resulted in its being dissolved, without ever having the Lord's supper administered. Eight of its members became members of the present Congregational Church, when it was first organized; four others became members afterwards; three, I believe, united with other Churches; and the remaining three never afterwards united with any Church whatever.

At the time when that Church was organized, as we have seen already, it does not appear that any more than six freemen had here been qualified; and it is probable there were not more than about twenty persons in town who might have been qualified. Yet, at a town meeting, May 20th, of the same year, it was voted that sixty dollars should be raised to provide preaching, which, in all probability, must have been a tax scarcely less heavy than one of \$2000, equally assessed on all the inhabitants of the town, would be at the present time.

It was more than ten years from the organization of the first Church, before another Church was formed. During that long season, Zion here languished and mourned. No accessions were made to the Church nominally existing; nor could its members have much enjoyed the outward privileges of the Lord's people. Some of them, however, we believe, He owned as His beloved friends; and though, for a season, they walked in darkness, He still heard their prayers, remembered His holy covenant with them, and His thoughts concerning them were thoughts of peace. At length, the time of deliverance came; and, on the 14th of April, 1794, the present Congregational Church was formed, consisting of twelve members,—seven males, all of whom have been long in their graves,—and five females, two of whom still survive; though only one of them now remains in connexion with this Church, and she has long resided at a distance from us. On the 20th of the same month, probably at the first communion season ever enjoyed in this place, four other females were added by letter, one of whom, our sister Varnum, still survives. In the course of the following season, the Lord was pleased to visit this people with the influences of His holy Spirit; and, as was hoped, to make a little number the subjects of renewing grace; so that, before the close of the year, nineteen more, one by letter, and eighteen by profession, were added to the Church, increasing its number to thirty-five, sixteen males, and nineteen females. Of this whole number, so far as I know, sixteen are still living,—seven males, and nine females; though only five of them remain here, and only three of these, and two others, who reside at a distance, remain in connexion with this Church. In 1796, four were added, two of whom had

been members of the former Church, and the others were received by letter from another Church. This increased the number to thirty-nine; which was still its number until the time of my ordination, myself being the fortieth member received.

In respect to the stated administration of the word and ordinances of the Lord, among this people, there was a long season of darkness. Coming, as the people had done, from different parts of the country, and entertaining somewhat discordant views, though they were generally desirous of these privileges, it was long before they could become united in inviting any one to become their Pastor. As already noticed, at a meeting for the purpose, the first year to which the records of the town go back, provision was made for obtaining preaching; and this, I believe, was done in every succeeding year, until a Pastor was obtained. As early as 1788, the committee for providing preaching was instructed to employ a preacher who would be likely to settle. Such votes of instruction were also repeatedly passed afterwards. In 1791, the Rev. Israel Chapin was regularly invited to become the Pastor, and an agreement was entered into with him, to which a large majority of the people acceded, though there was some opposition. Why the connexion was not consummated I think I was never informed. Efforts were also made to settle several others, but without success. To one other, the late Rev. Stephen Williams, the Church voted a call; but, happily, the town did not see fit to concur. Many others were employed for a time; but in none of them could the people be sufficiently united to retain them. An aged sister in the Church, who was among the early settlers in the town, has told me that, when she removed to this place, then little else than an unbroken forest, it seemed to her that she was almost entirely shut out from the house and ordinances of the Lord, and that she should almost never hear the gospel preached again; but that, when I began my labors here, I was the eightieth preacher whom she had heard in Peacham. This long delay, in respect to the settlement of a Minister of the gospel, was, doubtless, a trial of the faith and patience of the Lord's people here.

But at length, in the midst of this darkness, light, or what was apprehended to be light, sprung up. It might not, indeed, well become me to say that, in this respect, the time of favor came. Yet I *may* say, that what this Church, and a majority of this people, *thought* to be the time of favor, did come. An entire stranger, unknown even by face to all this people, excepting two young men, who had lived with me several years while engaged in another employment, I was, at their instance, invited, by a committee for supplying the pulpit, to come and preach a few Sabbaths at least, here. Accepting the invitation, I came hither, June 21st, 1799, with almost no expectation of ever preaching among this people more than six Sabbaths, having engaged, after that term, to visit another place

for a Sabbath or two, on my return to my family. But, before that short term expired, with unexpected and extraordinary unanimity, for a time of no little division in almost all towns and societies, and, especially, considering how long and how greatly this people had been themselves divided, both the Church and the Society presented me with an invitation to become their Pastor. After carefully attending to the subject, and weighing all the circumstances, I was constrained to consider it as a call in Providence, which I must not decline. It was accordingly accepted, and I was here ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, October 30, 1799; about twenty-three years from the first permanent settlement of a family in the town. During my ministry, efforts have not been wanting, from time to time, to alienate this beloved people from me, and to cause divisions among them. There have, also, as you well know, been seasons of great excitement among them, on various subjects; and, in more than one instance, no little darkness has seemed to rest on my prospects. Yet, having obtained help from God, I have continued until this present time; until, I think for more than ten years, not another minister, of any denomination, has remained, still performing the duties of a minister where he was at the time of my ordination, within the distance of at least eighty miles; and until my advanced age, and growing infirmities, have admonished me that it is time to retire, and give place to some more efficient laborer, in this important field.

In the mean time, there have been many and great changes among this people. Of six hundred and forty-five deaths, which came to my knowledge, I have kept a record; and probably there have been a number more, especially of little children, and in that part of the town which was formerly part of Deweysburgh, of which I was never informed. Among the deceased are a large proportion of the members of the Church and Society, who were active in my settlement here. I have solemnized three hundred and three marriages, a considerable majority of which have been cases in which both parties, and a much larger proportion in which one party or the other, belonged to this town. Many of these now have families, which have grown up under my ministry here, until quite a number of the children of these marriages have themselves become heads of growing families. Moreover, a large number of those who, at the time of my ordination, were inhabitants of this town, have since removed from among us, and others have succeeded them. Yet, through all these various scenes and changes, it is believed that, for upwards of thirty years of my ministry, the inhabitants of what was Peacham, at the time of my ordination, continued to belong to one religious Society, more generally than did the people of almost any other town, of any thing like equal population, in this state.

While I have much reason to lament my deficiencies, in discharging the important duties which have devolved upon me, as a Christian Minister, to ask forgiveness of God, and of his people, and to regret that my labors have been attended with no greater success ; yet, it is apprehended that a brief statement of facts must furnish some pleasing evidence, that the Lord has not left himself entirely without witness, even here. It has already been stated that the number of members in this Church, at the time of my ordination, was just forty. Of this number, however, only thirty-two resided in this town ; the residue being inhabitants of Barnet and Groton. The population of this town, at that time, is supposed to have been about eight hundred and fifty. Of course, the number of members in this Church, within the town, was less than four of each one hundred inhabitants. There were then, however, several members of other Churches here, who afterwards united with this Church ; besides a few of the Baptist denomination ; nearly twenty in all ; making the whole number of professing christians in town to be about fifty. Still, however, somewhat less than six of each one hundred inhabitants ; or about one in seventeen of the whole population. From my ordination to the present time, four hundred and eighty-four have been received to this Church by profession, and eighty-two by letter ; in all, five hundred and sixty-six ; making the whole number, who have been members of this Church, from its first establishment, about forty-five years ago, to be six hundred and six. Of this whole number, it is known that one hundred and seventeen have died members ; one hundred and seventy-six have been recommended to other Churches, or have otherwise united with them ; and thirty-one have been excluded ; in all, three hundred and twenty-four ; leaving two hundred and eighty-two who are still, nominally, members ; though not less than seventy-five of these are scattered abroad, and residing at a considerable distance from us ; so that not more than two hundred and seven can be considered as resident members, either in the town, or its immediate vicinity. Of these two hundred and seven, I think about one hundred and eighty reside within what was originally Peacham, and the residue in the towns adjoining. The one hundred and eighty it is believed must give at least fourteen to one hundred inhabitants, and more than one seventh part of the whole population of what was Peacham, until part of Deweysburgh was added to it ; and this addition, it is well known, did almost nothing to increase the number, or the strength, either of this Church, or Society. I do not recollect that a single member of either has resided in that part of the town, for several years. I am also informed, by the minister of the other Society, that there are one hundred members, residing within what was originally Peacham, connected with the Methodist Church, and three,

only, in what was Deweysburgh. There are, also, several members of other Congregational Churches, and a number belonging to other religious denominations, now residing among us; so that the whole number of professing christians now residing within what was the town of Peacham at the time of my ordination, is probably just about three hundred. This, it is believed, cannot fall very far short of one fourth of the whole population, which I think can hardly amount to one thousand and three hundred. Or, if the one hundred and eighty members of this Church, now residing in Peacham, be compared with the whole number properly belonging to the Congregational Society, or who have hitherto considered me as their minister, I think it must give a proportion of somewhat more than one fourth. For, when we deduct from the whole population, not only those who belong to the Methodist Society; but those, also, who formed themselves into a small Society of another denomination, in 1837, and the considerable number who do not attach themselves to any religious Society whatever, I think what will be found remaining, who may properly be considered as now belonging to this Society, cannot much exceed one half of the whole population, even of what was Peacham originally.

Of the six hundred and six who have been members of this Church, one hundred and thirty-six are known to have deceased; and, so far as I know, the remaining four hundred and seventy may be still living. Many of them, however, have removed far from us, some of whom, if yet alive, must be far advanced in years; so that it is very probable that a number have deceased, of whose death I have never been informed.

During my ministry here, as many of you well know, this Church has passed through some very trying scenes; and, by divine favor, it has also experienced some precious seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The first seventeen years passed away, and only fifty-seven were added, by profession, to its numbers. Though there was a season or two in which a little revival was witnessed, much the greater part of the time was one of no little darkness and discouragement. But, in the eighteenth year, a brighter day dawned. The spirit was wonderfully poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness became, indeed, a fruitful field. In the course of about eighteen months, from the beginning of August, 1817, to the beginning of February, 1819, no less than two hundred and twenty-five members were received by profession, and eight by letter; in all, two hundred and thirty-three. Then, indeed, the Lord had "done great things for us, whereof we were glad." "We sang his praise;" but, alas, we too soon "forgot his works."

To rebuke our ingratitude and unfaithfulness, another long season of darkness succeeded. The Lord was pleased to hide his

face, and we were troubled. The ways of Zion again mourned. In the course of twelve years, only twenty-three individuals united with us by profession. Distressing difficulties also existed, inducing great alienation, and much unkindness of feeling, among the members. A dark and portentous cloud hung over us. Some were almost saying, "The Lord hath forgotten to be gracious. He hath in anger shut up his tender mercies. He will be favorable no more." But, even in the midst of this darkness, He again arose for our help, and " compassed about with songs of deliverance ;" showing us that His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways ; but high above them, as the heavens are above the earth. Again the spirit was wonderfully poured upon us from on high. The dying graces of the Lord's people were revived. Many others inquired what they must do to be saved. A goodly number, we trust, truly fled for refuge to the hope set before them, and had "a new song put into their mouths, even praise unto our God." Yes, "our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." We were constrained to exclaim, "What hath God wrought !" "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

From the commencement of this revival, in July, 1831, in the course of fourteen months, one hundred and fifty-four were added to our number, by profession, and three by letter ; a greater number, I believe, than was added to any other Church in the state, during that season of extensive revival, in that and the succeeding year. At the close of the year 1832, the whole number of our nominal members was three hundred and seventy, which I think was the largest number then belonging to any one Church in this state, excepting that of Middlebury. The number residing within what was originally the town of Peacham, too, was, at that time, about two hundred and seventy ; more than one fifth of the entire population ; and scarcely less than one third of all who could be considered as then belonging to the Congregational Society. From that time, however, we have had cause to lament that our number, instead of increasing, has been much diminished. While only thirty-six have been added, twenty-five by profession, and eleven by letter ; on the other hand, seventy-two have gone from us, and united with other Churches ; thirty-seven have deceased ; and fifteen have been excluded ; in all, one hundred and twenty-four. This is a decrease of eighty-eight, in little more than seven years ; and it has reduced our whole number, as we have seen already, to two hundred and eighty-two, and the number now residing in Peacham, to one hundred and eighty.

It may not be improper for me to remark, in this connexion, that, for more than thirty-one years, from the time of my settlement here, this Church, and this Congregational Society, were the only organized Church and Society in Peacham. From its

first establishment, this Church has always acted on the principle of receiving to its fellowship, as members, all who have sought the privilege, and who gave evidence, in a judgment of charity, that they loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, however differing, in belief or practice, on subjects of minor importance. The doors of the Church being thus wide open, almost all, among this people, who, during that long season, indulged a hope that they had become Christians indeed, sought and found their home with us. All along, indeed, there were some, who preferred to unite with other denominations; but, instead of forming any other Society here, they sought their special privileges, mostly, in neighboring towns. Even during the great revival, in 1817 and 1818, almost all the subjects of the work united with us; and I do not remember that much disposition was manifested to form any other Society. This state of things continued, until the time of our second great revival, in 1831. At that time, an effort was made to form another Society; and it succeeded. Though the door of this Church was still open for the reception of all who desired to come, and who should exhibit evidence, in a judgment of charity, that they did truly love the Lord; yet a considerable number, some of whom were already members elsewhere, and others had recently indulged a hope that they had passed from death unto life, were induced to believe that they could enjoy greater privileges in a separate society, than they could in connexion with this Church; and, accordingly, another Society was formed, into which, as we have before seen, a considerable number has been gathered.

Considering how large a number have gone from this Church, and united with other Churches, within the last seven years, as already stated; and considering, also, the number of those who have been gathered into the Methodist Church, some may be ready to conclude that a very considerable number must have withdrawn from this Church and united with that. This, however, is not the fact. Of about 300 members of this Church, resident in this town and its immediate vicinity, when the Methodist Society was formed, or who became members with us soon after, only four or five have ever removed their relation, to unite with that body; and I think only two of these now reside in Peacham. Some five or six others had previously left us, and united with the Methodist Church elsewhere; most of whom, it is supposed, united with the Society here, either at the time of its formation, or afterwards; though I believe only one of these now remains in town. The result is, that, of the one hundred and three members of the Methodist Church, stated to be now resident in Peacham, I think only three were ever members of this Church. Of those who now belong to that body, a number, as already observed, though residing in this town, were members of the Methodist Church, enjoying their privileges in other places, at the time when the Society was

formed. Others have since come in, and united with it, from abroad. A number have also become members, who, though not members of this Church, were formerly pretty regular attendants on our religious solemnities, in this place of worship. And yet another number, perhaps larger than either of these, have been gathered in, who, it is believed, had not previously been very regular attendants on the means of grace any where.

I own, my friends, that I could not easily be persuaded to become a private member with our Methodist brethren, for various reasons; but, if there were no other, yet, certainly, because I could not willingly divest myself of the privilege of having some voice in the selection of those who should become my teachers, and be over me in the Lord; a privilege which I hope this beloved Church and Society will always both highly prize, and wisely improve. Nor could I be persuaded to become a Minister of that denomination, if for no other reason, yet, certainly, because I could not willingly subject myself to the control of others, so as scarcely to have any voice, in respect to the place where I should labor; and so as to be sent to a people, who should have no voice in my being called and located among them. It has ever been my aim, however, to treat our brethren and sisters of that denomination, and their Ministers, with christian courtesy and kindness; and I would rejoice in all that they are made instrumental of doing, for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, in the salvation of our fellow-sinners. In relation to them, and to all others, however differing from me, I would myself receive, and I would renewedly and affectionately urge it upon you all to receive the exhortation, to "follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

In noticing what the Lord has done among this people, the early establishment of an interesting Sabbath School, and its long continuance in a greater or less flourishing condition, even to the present time, should be very gratefully remembered. There is reason to believe that this school has been made a rich blessing to many of the rising and the recently risen generation; and it may be expected that it will long continue to be a blessing, in proportion to the interest which shall be taken in it, by parents and by children, and to the spirituality and fervency of the prayers which may be offered in its behalf. It is matter of devout thankfulness, that so goodly a number are still found among its members; though it is to be deeply regretted, that so many others still turn away from this precious mean of instruction; and I must be allowed most affectionately to entreat them to turn away no longer; lest they be found among those who shall "mourn at the last, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear unto those that instructed me."

In speaking of the works of the Lord, favorable to the prosperity of the Redeemer's cause, to morality, to religion, and to happiness, among this people, the temperance reformation is also worthy of very thankful notice. In respect to the common use of intoxicating drinks, the change is truly wonderful. The time has been when many gallons of alcoholic liquors were annually consumed in almost every family. Now, we believe, there is scarcely a family among us, where it is used so freely as it once was ; and, from a large majority of our families, it is hoped, it is almost entirely banished. But a few years ago, about thirty distilleries poured forth their polluted, polluting, and poisonous streams among this people. Now, I believe, not one remains in operation. The time is also well remembered, when ardent spirit was one of the most common articles of traffick in all our stores. Now, it has no place, for this purpose, in either of them. Surely, in view of this wonderful revolution, we have cause to exclaim, with devout gratitude and praise, " What hath God wrought ! "

On the whole, there is, perhaps, reason to believe that, in respect to general good order, sobriety, and morality, there are not very many towns of equal population to be found, in a comparison with which this town would greatly suffer.

After all, however, there is much cause for lamentation, and for deep humiliation, that, at present, the state of religion is so low among us ; that, notwithstanding all that the Lord has done among us, in times past, and a little reviving with which he has recently favored us, so many yet remain uninterested in the salvation of the gospel ; that iniquity still so much abounds, and that the love of so many has waxen cold. Indeed, we have cause for this humiliation, in proportion to all the great things which the Lord has done for us, and to our own ungrateful returns for his unnumbered benefits. Yet this, instead of forbidding us to notice the Lord's gracious dealings, should excite in us the greater admiration, and induce us to talk, with more devout and fervent gratitude, and in more elevated songs of praise, of all his wondrous works ; of those, especially, in which we are, ourselves, so immediately and so deeply interested.

If we duly attend to the several things which have been briefly noticed, and consider that only sixty-five years ago, since some of us were born, this whole town, where now are exhibited so many evidences of great and growing prosperity ; where are our goodly farms, and dwellings, and shops, and stores, and yonder flourishing seminary, and this commodious house, where we assemble for the worship of almighty God, and to hear the gospel's joyful sound, and still another place, consecrated for the same religious purpose, was all an unbroken, howling wilderness, where roamed savage beasts, and, sometimes, scarcely less savage men, how can we but exclaim, " What hath God wrought !" It is, indeed, true, that in respect to things like these, many places in our country exhibit

far greater wonders. Yet, even here, surely, the change is wonderfully great; and being all ascribed, as it certainly should be, to the power and the goodness of the Lord our God, we must be constrained to confess that He "hath done great things for us." But, above all, when we consider what He has done, even here, in favor of His great work of redemption, and for the salvation of precious souls, must not our wonder, our admiration, and our gratitude, be increased a thousand fold? and do we not perceive a thousand fold more reason for the admiring exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" Even here, where, so lately, no voice of prayer, and no song of praise had ever been heard, he has caused the gospel of salvation to be preached to many hundreds of immortal beings, who were ready to perish. Here he has caused that this Church of his redeemed people should be gathered, and that, though its beginning was small, its latter end should greatly increase; and more recently, too, still another body of His professing people has here been collected. Here, too, we believe, He has, more than once, wonderfully poured out His Holy Spirit, and displayed the riches of His grace, in convincing, and, as we humbly trust, savingly converting, hundreds of sinners, who were walking in the way of death, causing them to "be willing in the day of His power," forming them "vessels of mercy prepared unto glory," and making them glad with the joys of His salvation. Each individual, in whose heart this work of grace has been effected, is "a brand plucked out of the fire," and must surely be ready, with adoring wonder and love to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Mere spectators of such a work of grace may well say, "The Lord hath done great things for them;" and all the real subjects of such a work must gratefully respond, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." In view, then, of all that we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, of what the Lord hath done in this place, must not this whole Church, and not only the Church, but all this people, be constrained to take up the language of the text, and to say, "What hath God wrought!" And shall they not unitedly and gratefully add, "What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name." "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

And, finally, considering what ungrateful returns we have hitherto made for all these wonderful displays of divine goodness and grace,—how very far we have come short of rendering again according to all these benefits done unto us,—shall we not all be deeply humbled before the Lord our God, and unitedly and earnestly plead, "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved?"